



CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF
REALTORS® INC.

Statement on

H.B. 6465: AAC SMART GROWTH AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING...*SUPPORT*

H.B. 6466: AAC PROJECTS OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE...*SUPPORT*

**H.B. 6467: AAC SMART GROWTH AND PLANS OF CONSERVATION
AND DEVELOPMENT.... *SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS***

H.B. 6389: AAC PROMOTING REGIONALIZATION...*SUPPORT*

Submitted to Planning and Development Committee

March 2, 2009

by

T.J. Zappulla
Torrington

Good day, my name is T.J. Zappulla. On behalf of the Connecticut Association of REALTORS®, I strongly favor a group of smart growth bills that promote livable communities and at the same time respect market-driven, incentive-based approaches.

Three of the proposals were initiated by Rep. Sharkey's Smart Growth Working Group. The fourth is the Governor's and is funded in her proposed budget.

HB 6465: Realtors support this bill which integrates smart growth principles into transportation planning. It makes sense for the Transportation Strategy Board to provide comment on the extent to which projects do or don't meet smart growth criteria *before* money is allocated by the State Bond Commission. For example, some projects might lend themselves better to what are known as Location Efficient Mortgages. FNMA has used these to promote mixed use, pedestrian friendly developments that are sited close to rail lines and bus stations.

HB 6466 : Realtors favor this bill which requires regional planning organizations to facilitate a *voluntary* preapplication review process for developers of larger projects. If done correctly, this process will allow private developers to obtain an informal evaluation of costs and requirements of town and State agencies before risking undue expense and time. It will help make Connecticut become a bit more "business friendly."

HB 6467: This bill creates a definition in the statutes for "smart growth" and then makes it the policy of the State.

(continued)



The Voice for Real Estate™ in Connecticut

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HB 6467 needs to be amended by inserting at the beginning of Section 1, subdivision (1), subsection (B) the following :

"the adoption of fair and incentive-based methods to finance public services and development and" the reduction of the reliance on the property tax...

Left unchanged, a reference to the property tax alone , to the exclusion of all other fiscal measures, is problematic.

Also, immediately following in subsection (C) , the words "instead of new construction in undeveloped places" could be interpreted by some to be unduly restrictive. We urge that these words be added after "places":

"while protecting individual private property rights, including the freedom to own, use, and transfer real property"

HB 6389: An Act Promoting Regionalization, is Governor Rell's budget proposal. In this time of fiscal austerity, it is a creative way to help municipalities provide essential services in a cost-effective way, thereby relieving the burden on local taxpayers. It does not authorize the creation of new taxes. It has the virtue of using EXISTING state revenue and REALLOCATING it in a manner that rewards those communities who commit to "interlocal agreements" for joint service delivery. It builds on the Regional Performance Incentive Program. The Connecticut Association of Realtors supports this bill as a smart way to induce citizens of different towns to come together to share some services more efficiently than "going it alone"... while all the while preserving each town's distinctive identity.

Besides the \$40 million for regional infrastructure projects, there's a \$10 million fund for towns to jointly buy heavy equipment like bucket trucks, plows, and other machinery. In addition, there's a big carrot of 10 % bonus aid for road and other capital projects for those towns that qualify.

Thank you for your attention. I'll be happy to answer any questions.



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